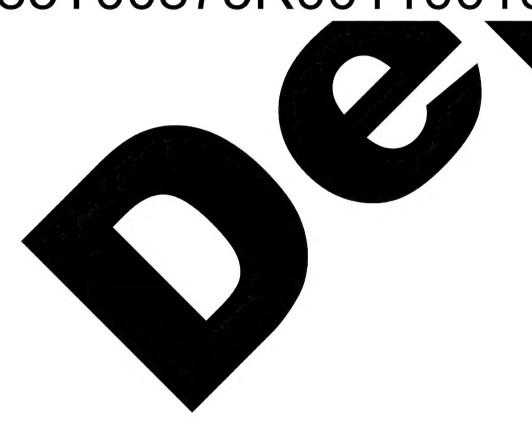
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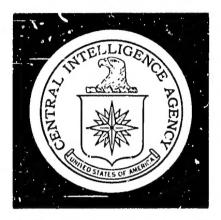
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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE



Intelligence Memorandum

USSR Adjusts to Sino-US Moves Toward Rapprochement

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY Directorate of Intelligence 10 September 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

USSR Adjusts to Sino-US Moves
Toward Rapprochement

Summary

The announcement on 15 July that President Nixon will visit China took Moscow by surprise and intensified its concern that Sino-US dealings may seriously harm Soviet interests. Moscow's behavior over the past eight weeks shows that it has chosen to react very differently toward the US on the one hand and China on the other.

The USSR is determined not to play into Peking's hands by jeopardizing Soviet-US ties. Indeed, recent and planned Sino-US contacts seem to have given the Soviets added incentive to breathe new life into Moscow's own dealings with Washington, and they have already taken steps to broaden and accelerate them. Contacts on the official level have been unusually cordial and the Soviets are clearly hoping that the US will show, in tangible ways, that its interest in developing relations with the Soviet Union has not waned. They also seem to be looking for ways to demonstrate that Moscow's various dealings with the US--in contrast to embryonic ties between Peking and Washington--can and do yield mutually profitable results.

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Moscow's outspoken castigation of Chinese policies, and particularly Peking's motives in expanding contacts with the US, indicates a Soviet assessment that more aggressive tactics are indicated visa-vis Peking. The Soviets seem to have concluded that of their two rivals, the Chinese are the more malicious and the readier to strike anti-Soviet barcains. Izvestia has charged specifically that the "defrosting" of Sino-US relations reflects "Peking's intention to bring pressure to bear on the Soviet Union." Chinese words and actions serve to reinforce Soviet suspicion and distemper.

Moscow's actions may also reflect a judgment that its differences with Peking are more serious and irreconcilable than the matters at issue between the Soviet Union and the US. It is, in any case, easier for the Soviet leaders to lash out at China for they realize that—unlike the situation with respect to their relations with Washington—they can hardly endanger any significant Sino—Soviet dealings that have not long since gone sour.

Elsewhere the USSR is taking initiatives designed to blunt the effects of Sino-US moves and, where possible, to turn them to Moscow's advantage. Tactical adjustments in Moscow's approach to key problem areas have already been introduced, and yet others are in the sounding stage.

The unaccustomed speed and flexibility with which the Soviets finally moved toward a satisfactory agreement on Berlin, for example, may have been influenced in some degree by recent contacts between Washington and Peking. These contacts, as well as China's growing ties with Romania and Yugoslavia, also seem to have contributed to the vehemence with which the USSR moved to warn the Balkan countries against trying to enlist Peking's support in their differences with Moscow. On the Indian subcontinent, the Soviets were able to take advantage of India's concern over US moves toward China, as well as New Delhi's present need for great-power support in

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the East Pakistan crisis, to nail down the Indians to the close relationship with the USSR imbedded in the Soviet-Indian treaty signed on 9 August.

Finally, the unprecedented vigor with which the top Soviet leaders will be engaging in personal diplomacy abroad this fall is perhaps the most graphic illustration of the catalytic effect recent events have had on Soviet efforts.

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- 1. The implications for Soviet interests of a new modus vivendi leading toward detente between the US and China are enormous, and the Soviet leaders are painfully aware of this. Indeed, over the past year or so they have spent no little time addressing this problem with a worry bordering on paranoia. The visit to China of a US table tennis team in April served to disquiet the Soviets further, but they were hardly prepared for the President's 15 July announcement, which came as an unwelcome shock to them.
- The Soviets are clearly concerned that over the longer term the USSR's two major rivals may resolve their differences and team up, inducing a change in the world balance of power against the USSR. On a more immediate level, the recent improvement in relations between Peking and Washington enhances China's prospects at the UN and increases Peking's international respectability. This directly frustrates Moscow's efforts to isolate and "contain" China. The Soviets are probably afraid that wider ties with the West may afford Peking readier access to sophisticated technology which will strengthen China economically and militarily. Moreover, they no doubt anticipate that any relaxation of Sino-US tensions over Taiwan or Vietnam could free some Chinese military units for redeployment to positions closer to the Sino-Soviet border.
- 3. Rapprochement with the US would permit China to devote even more intense energy to its offensive against the USSR. The Chinese are certainly aware that their recent moves toward the US may weaken Peking's position with some extreme leftists abroad, but seem to consider this a small price to pay for more far-reaching gains. In addition, recent Sino-US contacts may prove a source of acute embarrassment to the Soviet leaders, who are vulnerable to complaints by domestic critics that they have allowed themselves to be badly outmaneuvered.
- 4. In part because the Soviets look upon recent and planned US-China contacts as a political

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liability, Soviet officials have shown a reluctance to address the subject, and those few who have been authorized to talk have put forth a carefully worked out line. The Soviets appear under strict instructions to disguise Soviet anxieties and to avoid any suggestion that the USSR ascribes grave proportions to recent developments. Those Soviets who have commented have done their best to imply that Moscow is taking it all in stride. Their heavy stress on the serious difficulties remaining in the way of real Sino-US rapprochement, while well founded in fact, nevertheless often bears the earmarks of an effort at self-persuasion, and there is sometimes a tendency to protest too much. Ambassador Beam has recently reported his belief that US-Chinese contacts have shaken the Soviets in ways they do not care to admit.

5. Whatever the ultimate impact of recent events on the Soviet leaders, in the immediate future they almost certainly will not make radical departures in foreign policy. They will, however, see need for adjustments in present policies, even as they watch and weigh the future evolution of Washington-Peking ties. Soviet behavior over the last few weeks provides some basis for preliminary judgments with regard to the general nature and direction of these adjustments.

Moscow's Initial Reaction

I. Vis-a-vis the US

6. It may be instructive to list, in general terms, the kinds of options open to the Soviet leaders in mid-July.

Option A--to take the US-Chinese move badly; to represent it as a stub at the Soviet jugular; to reject US assurances that it is not aimed at harming the interests of the USSR. The Russians could

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have curtailed some Soviet-US engagements as a mark of their displeasure; they could have made a series of dramatic gestures designed to "prove" that Washington cannot use China to pressure the USSR and that, if the US nonetheless tries, it can expect a marked worsening of US-Soviet relations.

Moscow ruled out this kind of reaction, presumably because in order to make it credible the Soviets would have been forced to take steps that would harm their own interests as well; i.e., those interests that had motivated them to deal seriously with the US in the first place. Moreover, the Soviet leaders undoubtedly concluded that China would be the only one to gain if Moscow overreacted in this fashion-that Peking would be delighted were the Kremlin to lash out at the US.

Option B -- to react with great reserve; not to disrupt ties with the US, but nonetheless to make Soviet displeasure unmistakably clear, perhaps treating US officials to long haranques designed to illustrate the futility of trying to use China against the USSR. The Soviets could have elected to avoid scrupulously any forthcoming move that others could suspect was engendered by new US-Chinese pressure tactics. Out of this concern, the Soviet leaders could have persuaded themselves it was wise to impose new constraints on their own actions; to avoid, for example, concessions on Berlin, even though such concessions might otherwise have seemed appropriate in return for similar moves on the part

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of the Allies and the prospect of getting Soviet policy toward Western Europe off dead center.

Option C--to carry on business as usual with the US, at least during the period leading up to the Nixon visit to China; not to be overly sensitive to, and thus deterred by, the thought that certain forthcoming Soviet moves might be interpreted as the result of mounting US-Chinese pressure on Moscow; but at the same time to let the US know that the USSR would look for tangible proof that Washington too remains interested in improving Soviet-US relations.

- 7. Moscow's actions to date indicate a decision in favor of option C, at least for the time being. In fact, there are already scattered indications that the Kremlin would like Soviet-US relations to appear better (or, at least, busier and more visible) than usual. The evidence available to date, though far from conclusive, suggests that the 15 July announcement has given Moscow added incentive to deal seriously with the US, and to have such dealings well publicized. Earlier constraints on Soviet overtures to the US, which had been a reflection of sensitivity to Chinese charges of "treacherous" cooperation with the US, have of course long since weakened, and recent Sino-US contacts have served to dissipate such contraints altogether.
- 8. The US Embassy in Moscow, noting that recent Soviet signals regarding relations with the US have been somewhat mixed, has pointed out that on the official level the tone has been more positive than has been the case in some time. Gromyko, for example, has twice referred favorably to President Nixon's contribution to the agreement on Berlin. In addition, Soviet Politburo member Suslov's recent reception of Senator Scott in Moscow can be rated as cordial

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by Soviet standards. Both Suslov and Gromyko have maintained that the USSR assigns top priority to relations with the US. Some US visitors to the USSR have been accorded less cordial and more propagandistic treatment but such incidents have been few and appear outweighed by a rather forthcoming attitude on the official level.

- 9. On 24 August, for example, the Soviets told US officials that they would like to hold talks on a new cultural exchange agreement before the end of the year. The Soviets said they were now preparing their own proposals, and suggested informal consultations prior to exchanging drafts in November. This would mark the first time since 1959 that the USSR has agreed to negotiate a new cultural exchange agreement before the expiration of the old one. The Soviet move is particularly interesting in the light of past experience, which shows that Soviet behavior in talks on cultural exchange has often been a direct reflection of how cordial—or how acrimonious—the Kremlin would like the climate of Soviet—US relations to be at a given time.
- The prospect of improvements in Sino-US ties has had no observable effect on attempts to deal with the main issues at SALT, and Soviet officials at the Helsinki round have generally avoided discussing the matter. Recent Soviet overtures, however, suggest that Moscow wishes to call prominent attention to the conclusion of the secondary talks on accidental nuclear launch and hot-line upgrade. The Soviets are motivated in part by a desire to show that SALT has yielded some progress. They also seem intent on taking advantage of the success achieved with respect to these secondary agreements -- which had been virtually concluded by the close of the last Vienna round--in order to make the more general point that Soviet-US common interests and recent bilateral dealings can lead to tangible advances.
- 11. Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin suggested to Secretary Rogers on 25 August that Foreign Minister Gromyko's visit to Washington late next month would be a good time to sign the agreement on accidental

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nuclear launch. In addition the US and USSR are very close to agreement on final wording for a new direct communications link (hot line) agreement, which will almost certainly be wrapped up by the end of the present SALT round. The Soviets are continuing to press for formal conclusion of a separate agreement on this subject soon. Longplanned Soviet-US talks on measures to prevent incidents at sea are now scheduled to begin in Moscow in mid-October and will provide another highly visible example of Moscow's continuing ability to engage the US in various joint undertakings. There is still the prospect, of course, that some targible progress will be made this year on some of the basic issues at SALT.

- 12. Dobrynin also told Secretary Rogers that Gromyko wished to "cocrdinate" his own stay in New York this month (at the UN) with that of Mr. Rogers. While in the US, Gromyko may wish to discuss, among other things, Premier Kosygin's scheduled visit to Canada—as well as unspecified other countries—next month. The Soviets may even entertain the possibility of a Soviet-US summit meeting, perhaps in connection with Kosygin's trip. Press reports quoting East European sources have alleged that Moscow may be planning a bid to bring about a high-level US—Soviet meeting before President Nixon travels to Peking.
- 13. The steps that the US has taken to reassure Moscow that Washington's growing contacts with China are not motivated by a sinister anti-Soviet intent may be having some impact. Interestingly, Pravda carried a relatively balanced account of a recent speech by Mr. Rogers, specifically noting his remarks to the effect that recent US moves vis-avis China do not mean any lessening of interest in serious negotiations with the USSR. The Soviet leaders, of course, will never let themselves be convinced that US intentions are honorable and not directed against the USSR, but they have at

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least not turned aside various US attempts to reassure them, and they are likely to seek yet stronger assurances as the time for the President's trip draws near. The Chinese, on the other hand, have apparently made no attempt to placate the Soviets; instead they have openly linked China's increasing contacts with the US to Peking's continuing confrontation with the USSR.

In sum, the general tenor of Soviet-US contacts over recent weeks indicates that the 15 July announcement did not derail the Soviet leaders from the "detentist" track laid down at the 24th party congress in the spring of this year. Rather it seems to have provided fresh stimulus for Soviet activity in that direction. viets, of course, recognize that when it comes to diverse, significant dealings with the US they are far cut in front of China, and will work at holding on to and exploiting this advantage. addition, Moscow's propaganda treatment of US motives for increased ties with China has evidenced unusual restraint and balance in contrast to the harsher anti-Chinese blasts emitted daily by Soviet media.

II. Vis-a-vis China

15. Less is known about Soviet actions with respect to China in the wake of the President's 15 July announcement. Propaganda provides a useful index, however, to Moscow's reactions. Over recent weeks, Soviet polemical thrusts have reached an intensity not seen for more than a year.

charges in the central press has recently included a particularly sensitive and volatile issue, i.e., suppression of minority races inside China. But the pervasive theme is that Chinese actions abroad are fashioned by a "blind anti-Sovietism" which, as Pravda claimed recently, endangers the "vital interests" of Communists everywhere.

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- 16. Peking has taken delight in Moscow's discomfiture over increasing US-Chinese contacts, and had done nothing to allay Soviet suspicions. On the contrary, a recent article in Peking's authoritative journal Red Flag spelled out some of China's motives. The journal justified China's moves in terms of isolating a single "die-hard" enemy--read the USSR--and stressed that it is necessary to conclude alliances with lesser enemies. Alluding to the USSR and the US, Red Flag emphasized Mao's distinctions "between the primary enemy and the secondary enemy" and "between imperialism which is now committing aggression against China and the imperialist powers which are not doing so now."
- It is altogether likely that the Soviets 17. would resent Peking's role more than Washington's in moves toward rapprochement, even if the former were less blatant in divulging the anti-Soviet aspect of its intentions. In Moscow's probable view, the Chinese have more malicious intent and pose the most annoying and proximate threat to Soviet interests. The Soviets were no doubt surprised and chagrined by the extent of recent changes in US behavior toward China. Nevertheless, they may be persuaded, by what they see to be the logic of recent developments, that Peking is more to be blamed than Washington for the recent improvement in Sino-US ties. Izvestiya specified the charge recently when it accused Peking of adopting a policy of befriending any country that was hostile to the USSR. It is, in any case, easier for the Soviet leaders to hit out at Peking, for they realize they are endangering no Sino-Soviet dealings that have not long since gone sour.
- 18. It is not surprising then that the Soviets have reacted with more indignation and acrimony toward Peking than toward Washington. Over the past few

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years, Peking has made the USSR Enemy Number One, and Moscow has now clearly reciprocated. Even when the Soviets have made what they think to be forthcoming gestures, such as they may have earlier this year at the border talks in Peking, they have been met with implacable inflexibility. The Soviets recently claimed that despite "certain concessions" on their part, the Chinese were still making the same "substantial territorial demands" as before. There must be grave doubt in the minds of Soviet leaders as to whether Peking will for the foreseeable future become interested in serious dealings with the USSR, all the more so now that China has widened its diplomatic options and room for maneuver.

- The two countries are at loggerheads on issues directly relating to the territorial integrity and national security of both states, and are fierce ideological and political competitors throughout the "progressive" world. These are not the kinds of issues that separate Moscow from Washington (or Feking from Washington, for that matter). The US claims no Soviet territory, nor does it question the legitimacy of the Soviet Union's present re-There is no historical bad feeling between the Russian and American peoples, and no racial hatred or fear: Ironically, the ability of both the US and USSR to inflict intolerable damage on the other has resulted in a certain mutual understanding and a relatively stable relationship, in contrast to more volatile Sino-Soviet dealings.
- 20. Moscow is careful, of course, to say that it wants to normalize relations with Peking. However, the USSR's virulent anti-Chinese polemical campaign, exemplified by Pravda's diatribe of 4 September, is just one indication that there is actually very little hope in Moscow that ties with China can be improved over the near term. On the other hand, there is no sign yet that the Soviets

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will let their antipathy and chagrin spill over and affect residual state-to-state dealings with China. Chief Soviet border negotiator Ilichev went home to Moscow in August for some well-earned home leave but is now back in Peking. Although Izvestiya's recent charge that Peking has rejected Moscow's "constructive proposals" on the border question bodes ill for the talks, the Soviets will probably plod on. The USSR seems to place a high premium on such contacts, and clearly wants to avoid letting relations again plummet to the nadir they hit two years ago.

The Catalytic Effect: Moscow's Moves Elsewhere

21. Soviet reaction to US-Chinese developments is perhaps even more noteworthy with respect to third countries, where the Soviets have been unusually busy over the past few weeks. And the recently publicized travel plans of top Soviet leaders indicate that they intend over the next several months to breathe new life into Soviet diplomacy in Europe and Asia. There is, of course, a danger of oversimplification in isolating the announcement of 15 July and viewing subsequent Soviet foreign policy moves primarily against this benchmark. Enough has taken place, however, to suggest that the announcement of the US-China move has already contributed at least indirectly to the pace of recent and prospective Soviet activities abroad. The Soviets seem bent on recapturing the initiative in a spirit of intense competition with both China and the US.

Movement on Berlin

22. There is a close temporal relationship between the 15 July announcement and new Soviet flexibility at the four-power talks on Berlin. At a Berlin advisers meeting on 28 July the Soviets reversed field and told the Allies that Moscow wanted an agreement by mid-August; they suggested that talks move into a more intense phase on the ambassadorial level. Soviet behavior during the ensuing weeks

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made it clear that Ambassador Abrasimov had finally gotten the green light and surprisingly broad latitude from Moscow.

- 23. There is some evidence predating 15 July that the Soviets were looking ahead to August as the turning-point in the Berlin negotiations. Moscow's overtures toward Western Europe had been stymied by the lack of progress on Berlin, and the West Germans had let the Soviets know that continued stonewalling would seriously endanger prospects for West German ratification of the treaties with the USSR and Poland. When it became clear to the USSR earlier this summer that it would be able to secure a considerable increase in its official presence in West Berlin, the stage may finally have been set for the kind of concessions the Soviets made in early August—quite apart from recent Sino-US developments.
- Nevertheless, the unaccustomed alacrity and flexibility with which the Soviets finally moved toward a satisfactory agreement on Berlin-after 16 months of protracted sparring--suggests that the Soviet leaders may have been influenced in some degree by the news that President Nixon will visit Peking. This, of course, would not have been the first time that Chinese behavior had influenced Soviet policies in Europe in a broad sense. Chinese pressure along the Sino-Soviet border in 1969 seems to have influenced Moscow's receptivity to Willi Brandt's Ostpolitik, after he assumed power that fall. It is not unlikely that more recent Chinese pressures, in this case in the form of rapprochement with the US, will provide the USSR with still greater incentive to tidy up and improve its relations with Western Europe. With the Berlin impasse broken, it will now be possible to do this.
- 25. It would be a mistake, of course, to interpret recent forthcoming moves on Berlin as conciliatory gestures by the USSR vis-a-vis the US. Moscow's primary objective has been to remove the Berlin roadblock in order to permit the Soviets to pursue more

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successfully a policy intended to erode and if possible, eventually to displace US influence in Western Europe. A concerted Soviet offensive toward this end can be expected in the wake of the recent progress on Berlin.

The Cathartic Effect: The Balkans

- 26. Moscow's determination to turn the heat on Romania and Yugoslavia seems also to have grown more intense under the impact of recent improvement in Sino-US ties, and the general increase in Chinese diplomatic activity, and the Soviets clearly have decided to move aggressively to counter Chinese inroads in the Balkans. The Soviet leaders apparently conveyed this decision to all the East European party chiefs--save Ceausescu--who held a "vacation" gettogether in the Crimea on 2 August, and enlisted their support. Moscow's recent tactics closely resemble in some respects the reaction from Peking six years ago, when the USSR launched a new effort to inject Soviet influence into China's backyard, i.e., in North Vietnam.
- 27. The Soviets seem most troubled by Romanian party chief Ceausescu's attempts to use his improved relations with Peking to increase Romania's room for maneuver vis-a-vis the USSR. In addition to this concern, the Soviets probably believe that Bucharest had a hand in facilitating US-Chinese contacts, a suspicion that must rankle. As for the Yugoslav case, Moscow presumably sees in China's willingness to improve ties with the arch-revisionist Yugoslavs a particularly crass example of China's opportunistic willingness to prescind from ideological considerations, and to give highest priority to using cooperative third countries to make mischief for Moscow.
- 28. It is clear, in any event, that the Soviets mean to bear down hard on the Balkan countries where the USSR's power can still evoke fear, if not respect. Moscow's primary aim apparently is to disabuse the

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Romanians and Yugoslavs--and by extension the other East Europeans--of the notion that they can successfully use their growing ties with Peking against the USSR. Ceausescu's courtship with China has been Moscow's most immediate target, and the Soviets are intent on holding this up as an example of impermissible behavior.

- 29. The Soviet leaders may suspect that Ceausescu has already gone dangerously far in nailing down support from China and Yugoslavia for his defiant behavior. In late July the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak party, in guidance passed to party cadres, alleged that Romania had concluded a secret military treaty with China, which would reinforce China's foothold in Eastern Europe. There is no good evidence to substantiate this charge, which may have been manufactured by the Soviets to be used for appropriate effect. Nonetheless, Moscow cannot be sure that the Romanians have not already succumbed to the temptation to go almost that far.
- 30. That the Soviet leaders are troubled by Belgrade's rapprochement with both the US and China is also clear, and may account in part for Brezhnev's apparent desire to visit Yugoslavia later this month. Moscow clearly wanted the visit scheduled to precede Tito's trip to Washington in October. Specific planning for the Brezhnev visit may have begun on 24 July, when the Soviet charge delivered a personal message from Brezhnev to Tito.

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clear that a main topic of discussion would be "China and the US."

31. In sum, through their concerted efforts visarvis Romania and, to a lesser degree, Yugoslavia, the Soviets seem determined to warn them, and China as well, not to test further the limits of Soviet patience. Presumably Moscow hopes that, if its efforts are successful in demonstrating the futility of trying to use contacts with China as a pressure tactic against the USSR, the lesson will not be lost on other third countries, including the US.

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., and on the Subcontinent: India Gets Twenty Years

- 32. A concern to counter the effects of the thaw in Sino-US relations probably also contributed to the speed with which the USSR and India revived and brought to completion the Friendship Treaty which the two countries signed on 9 August. This project was first broached by Moscow in 1969 as part of an Asian diplomatic offensive aimed against China, but negotiations died out in 1970. This summer, however, the outbreak of rebellion in East Pakistan put New Delhi under new and severe pressures. In casting about for superpower support, India's sense of isolation was heightened considerably by continued US arms deliveries to Pakistan, by Washington's use of Pakistani good offices in arranging Dr. Kissinger's visit to Peking, and particularly by the news of President Nixon's plan to visit China. The cumulative pressure of these developments seems to have prompted New Delhi to turn to the Soviet Union with an appeal for a dramatic demonstration of Soviet support for India.
- The Soviets apparently were quick to take 33. advantage of India's distress to increase and consolidate Moscow's influence in India. Unable to persaude the Indians to conclude a treaty in 1969, the Soviets were glad to have India sign up now. There is evidence that Moscow's move enabled Mrs. Gandhi to resist--at least temporarily--mounting pressures for a decisive Indian move on the East Pakistan problem, and this was undoubtedly part of Moscow's immediate intent. The USSR's longer term purposes, however, have remained primarily anti-Chinese, Moscow was certainly aware that over the past several months Peking had made conciliatory gestures toward India, and that the Indians had not reacted negatively. With this in mind, the Soviet leaders certainly welcomed the unusual opportunity to nail the Indians down to a long-term close relationship with the USSR. The Soviets probably now feel they have to a degree recaptured the initiative, gained considerable ground against both China and the US, and taken a long step toward consolidating the USSR's position in India and Asia as a whole.

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...and Podgorny to Hanoi

- 34. The announcement that Soviet President Podgorny will lead a delegation to Hanoi in early October is not surprising, particularly in view of recent events. At the conclusion of North Vietnamese party chief Le Duan's visit to Moscow last spring, the Soviets promised to send such a delegation, and there had been sporadic rumors that the Soviets would dispatch a high-level mission soon. Such a visit commended itself even more in the wake of the announcement that President Nixon will visit China and the consternation and chagran this development engendered in Hanoi.
- 35. Moscow will undoubtedly try to use the Podgorny visit to exploit North Vietnam's increased misgivings with regard to China's behavior and to stress, in contrast, the dependability of the Soviet commitment to assist Hanoi. Podgorny is likely to indulge in grandstanding aimed at proving to "progressives" throughout the world the constancy and efficacy of Moscow's support. His visit will provide an opportunity to turn back upon the Chinese their earlier charges of Soviet "treachery" to the Communist cause in Vietnam, and will in that sense represent the culmination of Soviet efforts which were first launched toward this end when Kosygin visited Hanoi in early February 1965.

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